

## The Invasion of Italy

89

Constantine's clemency was the theme and admiration of all. When the people clamoured for more victims — doubtless the most hated instruments of Maxentius's tyranny—and when the informer pressed forward to offer his deadly services, Constantine refused to listen. He was resolved to let bygones be bygones. The laws of the period immediately succeeding his victory, as they appear in the Theodosian Code, amply confirm what might otherwise be the suspect eulogies of the Panegyrists. A general act of amnesty was passed, and the ghastly head of Maxentius was sent to Africa to allay the terrors of the population and convince them that their oppressor would trouble them no more. There, it is to be supposed, it found a final burial-place.

Another early act of Constantine was to disband the Praetorians, thus carrying out the intention and decrees of Galerius. The survivors of these long-famous regiments were marched out of Rome away from the Circus, the Theatre of Pompoms, and the Baths, and were set to do their share in the guarding of the Rhine and the Danube. Whether they bore the change as voluntarily as the Panegyrist suggests \* is doubtful, and we may question whether they so soon forgot in their rude cantonments the fleshpots and " *ddicm* " of the capital, But the expulsion was final. The Praetorians ceased to exist. Rome may have been glad to see the empty barracks, for the Praetorians had been hated and feared. But the vacant quarters also spoke eloquently of the fact

\* *Pan. Vet.*, k., ax.